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## The Messiah and the Mandarins:

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however, for Arnold (as Coffey admits) was no Mitchell. If the entertainment value is there, does the interpretation square with the main lines of airpower history as it is now understood—or are the variances satisfactorily explained?

Though Coffey clearly does accept uncritically the standard Air Corps assumption that those who did not wear wings were generally old “fogeys” and reactionaries, for the most part he avoids the controversial issues of the history of interwar and Second World War airpower. Notwithstanding the jacket’s assertion that this is “The Story of the U.S. Air Force and the Man Who Built it,” it is much more the story of the man than it is a tale of the air arm. Though Coffey has most of his facts about airpower history straight, all of it is fairly well known already and if the reader’s goal is to enhance his knowledge in that field, he would do better to look elsewhere.

If the reader is interested in the study of military leadership, *HAP* is of some worth. Though it relies very heavily on Arnold’s own *Global Missions* and the testimony of his three sons, there is enough to constitute an impressionistic portrait of his character. He was irascible. He was impatient. He was ambitious, perhaps excessively so—if one is to believe the testimony of some of his rivals. He was not the world’s most impressive family man. But perhaps he *was* the sort of leader that was required by *that* particular crisis. The World War One air mobilization was a dismal failure—and Arnold, then a colonel in Washington, was on the scene to observe all the mistakes that were made then. Twenty years later, armed with that knowledge, a driving and impatient character, and possessed with enough ruthlessness to do what needed to be done, Arnold may well have been the

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man for the hour. Dwight Eisenhower in his diaries wondered whether Arnold’s closest chum, General Carl Spaatz, had enough toughness for air leadership—but there was no question in Arnold’s case. It seems clear from the evidence offered by Coffey that Arnold cannot have been a very nice man to work for, but that he got the job done. The organization of the Army’s air arm for World War Two *was* far superior to that of the earlier war. He was the organizer; fortunately he had some lieutenants who were possessed with entirely different personalities much better suited for the employment of the instruments that Arnold built.

*HAP* is not a major contribution to the history of airpower; it is an interesting case study in one possible style of leadership that proved successful in an emergency setting where the main problem was quickly organizing and building a force to fight a major war. In short, taken with a grain of salt, *HAP* can provide an entertaining evening of reading but it is *not* a definitive work.

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Bloodworth, Dennis. *The Messiah and the Mandarins: Mao Tse-tung and the Ironies of Power*. New York: Atheneum, 1982. 331pp. \$15.95

Statesmen and literary figures are subject to constant reevaluation by posterity. The process begins immediately after their deaths and, in the case of giants, goes on for centuries. Usually, these ratings are at their highest in the immediate years following their demise. Then, there is a decline followed by almost cyclical fluctuations. In the case of Mao, this has not been true. Almost simultaneously at his death in 1976, the revisionists took over in obvious reaction

to the feckless adulation that had been Mao's in the years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Even before Mao's death, revisionists in Beijing and, of course, Moscow were hard at work; revisionism took longer to reach the West—some felt in the seventies that there were more Maoists in Cambridge (Massachusetts and England) than in Beijing.

Moscow's first try at Mao's reputation came before his death. In 1973, *The Vladimirov Diary* appeared, purporting to be the diary of a *Tass* correspondent and Comintern agent in Yenan from 1942 to 1945. The diary described Mao as crude, lazy, and a coward. The book was later published in New York by Doubleday despite a warning from retired Foreign Service Officer John Service, who had been in Yenan for part of the time, that the diary might not be authentic.

No such question seems to have been brought against the report of another Soviet agent, a German, Otto Braun. His book appeared originally in East Germany in 1973 (American edition is 1982), *A Comintern Agent in China*. Braun served with the Chinese Communist Party from 1932 to 1939, and he is frank to say that his memoirs "are a weapon in the political struggle against Maoism which ought to help unmask the Maoist distortions of history."

The posthumous attack on Mao has sparked internecine warfare among China watchers, some of whom have found their pre-1976 words of praise for Mao to sound a bit awkward today. Leading the charge against the friends of Mao has been Pierre Rykmans, a Belgian art historian of long residence in China who writes under the name of Simon Leys. He first published *The Emperor's New Clothes* in Europe in 1971 (no English translation appeared until 1977, which tells something of Maoist strength among

US and UK China watchers) because of his "dismay and horror" that the media in the West were keeping the public ignorant of the truth of the madness of the Cultural Revolution (at about that time, I was assured by a young Swedish socialist that "all countries" should have a Cultural Revolution in their futures). Later (1974 in France, 1977 in the United States), Leys published *Chinese Shadows* which wounded yet more of his fellow watchers. But it was in an article in *The Times Literary Supplement* of 6 March 1981, that Leys moved in for the kill. Under the title "All Change among the China-watchers," Leys strafed Ross Terrill's biography, *Mao*, torpedoed Han Su Yin (she "seldom lets her intelligence, experience and information interfere with her writing," particularly in her two-volume biography of Mao, *Wind in the Tower* and *The Morning Deluge*) and bombed Edward Friedman for his 1980 discovery that there had indeed been atrocities committed by the Red Guards ten or so years previously. Mr. Friedman, a staffer of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, incautiously counter-attacked in the 12 June *TLS*, forgetting that on his flank were words on Mao that he had written in the seventies: "Mao by the example of his struggle communicates the vigour of hope, the vitality of possibility, the vision of justice. Mao's message to the 20th century is elegantly simple: what should be can be." (in *Mao Tse-tung in the Scales of History*, edited by Dick Wilson, 1977.)

These battles of the lamp now have a new contender in the lists, Dennis Bloodworth. He has been the London *Observer's* man in the Far East for over 25 years. By himself or with his wife, Ching Ping, he has written five books on Asian affairs that have been marked by accuracy, common sense, and good humor. This volume is not a straight

biography of Mao nor a book on the China scene today. Rather it is an attempt to show "an extraordinary paradox, matching the magnitude of Mao's achievement against the enormity of his errors."

Bloodworth follows the course of the Chinese revolution (a revolution that begins at the latest in 1912), but keeps the focus on Mao. Throughout Bloodworth insists on the "Chineseness" of Mao, a view that would seem risky in describing a man who professed himself to be first and foremost a Marxist-Leninist. Bloodworth helps make his point though by repeated references to two traditional Chinese books that had the greatest of impact on Mao. The first is *Water Margin* (the English translation by Pearl Buck is called *All Men Are Brothers*). This is a 14th-century Chinese Robin Hood tale that has long been a model of Chinese rebellion against the ills of society. The second book is *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (English translation by C.H. Bewitt-Taylor, published in Tokyo in 1959), a swash-buckling story of strategy and war set in the third century, but written in the 13th century when China had been conquered by the Mongols.

Mao referred to these books continually throughout his long life. He would use allusions and illustrations from them to admonish, exhort, instruct, and pacify his associates and enemies. This practice is common in China where literary, scholarly, or theatrical references are used by public figures in daily intercourse (one imagines Secretary James Watt invoking Birnham Wood or Dunsinane in explaining a new forest policy). What is important in Mao's case is that rebels are glorified in these books—rebels and guerrillas. One of the earliest of Western commentators on China, Thomas Taylor Meadows, wrote in 1856

that the Chinese were the most rebellious and least revolutionary people in the world. This difference is set forth very clearly in Albert Camus' *The Rebel*—the rebel is struggling against concrete injustice, the revolutionary against the total system that includes the injustice. Meadows saw the Chinese as only the former, Mao certainly thought himself the latter. But having beaten the system as a revolutionary, did he then revert to rebel and try to hamstring, by the Cultural Revolution, the very system he had played such a vital role in founding? Bloodworth concludes "he was a very Chinese hero" who "was the right man at the right moment, but if he was not born before his time, he did not die before it either."

The definitive work on Mao may be as much as a century away, but for the here-and-now, Bloodworth has given us a study that should stand alongside Stuart Schram's *Mao Tse-tung* (first published in 1966) and Benjamin Schwartz's *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (first issued in 1951) in delineating the line between Mao, the Communist, and Mao, the Chinese. In so doing, Bloodworth has given us a good antidote to the fatuous nonsense of Mao worship that the trendy boys of the academic world were trying to feed us in the sixties and seventies.

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Cadoux, C. John. *The Early Christian Attitude to War*. Somers, Conn.: Seabury Press, 1982. 304pp. \$7.95

This book is a Golden Oldie. Subtitled "A Contribution to the History of Christian Ethics," it was first published in 1919 by its author, late MacKenna Professor of Church History, Oxford, in the wake of the first World War. Its reprinting today helps to meet the rising